



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Cheney, Hecht, Johnson, O'Rourke

ABSENT: Loch, Palmer, Robertson

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Whitt, Captain Kolke, DPW Team Lead Ladd, Recording Secretary Gross, Confidential Assistant Jaquays

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

Commissioner Hecht said he would like to have discussion on board members that haven't been in attendance for the past several meetings.

Commissioner O'Rourke said he would like to add the following items for discussion to the agenda: YTD Budget, Park amenities, Trailway safety, and an update on the Rogers Entertainment proposed concert.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

P&R 09-01-20 APPROVAL OF THE JULY 13, 2020, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Cheney, seconded by Hecht, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the July 13, 2020 Parks and Recreation meeting minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Farmers Market Report

Walled Lake Market Manager Hana Jaquays provided a follow-up from the July Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, explaining the Farmers' Market is still functioning well. Ms. Jaquays said there are seven weeks left for the farmers' market season. Ms. Jaquays explained that the city has had an increase in participation in July so there was room to expand the market with the help from our DPW Team Leader Dan Ladd. Ms. Jaquays said the city was able to increase the market space to include all the new vendors. Ms. Jaquays explained that many are looking forward to the new access bridge to connect the Walled Lake trail to the public safety campus. Ms. Jaquays explained that trail users will be able to utilize the bridge to increase the participation at the market. Ms. Jaquays opined that there was a great turn out so far and the Farmers Market social media presence has helped with that turn out. Ms. Jaquays strongly

encouraged everyone to go check out the market on Facebook and Instagram. Ms. Jaquays explained that if one follows the market on social media, they will see updates. Ms. Jaquays explained that it is nearing harvest time and she is excited to announce that apples are now in season with pumpkins available soon with the fall season coming.

Chairman O'Rourke said he attended the farmers market about two weeks ago and said Ms. Jaquays has done a really good job with increasing the number of vendors, vendor management, and making herself visible to the visitors of the market. Mr. O'Rourke opined that the Walled Lake social media aspect has helped a lot in the advertisement of the market. Mr. O'Rourke said he wanted to compliment Market Manager Jaquays on her efforts improving the market management.

Commissioner Johnson said he takes his position on the Parks & Recreation Commission very seriously. Mr. Johnson said he has attended the farmers market a few times this season and his conclusion is similar to Mr. O'Rourke. Mr. Johnson opined that Manager Jaquays is doing an excellent job with the market. Mr. Johnson said the vendors seem like great people with great products. Mr. Johnson said the crowds of people attending seem happy and excited about the market. Mr. Johnson said when he attended, he was asking people where they were coming from and found people were coming out from all over to visit the market. Mr. Johnson said he was also able to stop into the JET Theater production that took place at the public safety campus last month. Mr. Johnson said he was quite pleased with how they handled the whole production and how it was set up. Commissioner Johnson opined that Mr. Whitt, Ms. Jaquays, and the DDA did a great job assisting with the event.

Commissioner Hecht thanked Ms. Jaquays for all her efforts. Mr. Hecht suggested to Ms. Jaquays that tracking attendance or sales this season be presented to the Recreation Commission at the end of the season.

Market Manager Jaquays thanked Mr. Hecht for his suggestions stating they are appreciated. Ms. Jaquays said she realizes data collection is important however, due to the late start and her wearing multiple hats with the city she did not track much information for this season. Ms. Jaquays said because of the late start and COVID-19 there has been some changes to the market and if data was collected it would be inconsistent because of these changes. Ms. Jaquays said she is looking forward to doing an end of the season survey for her vendors and clients that have visited the market. Ms. Jaquays said she is hoping to utilize the feedback in order to improve the market for next year. Ms. Jaquays said she will look into doing data collection for the 2021 farmers' market season. Ms. Jaquays said she will prepare a re-cap for the commission with as much information she can gather as the market comes to an end.

2. Mercer Beach Report

City Manager Whitt explained that the city closed the beach because of the large crowds gathering, and without people social distancing. Mr. Whitt stated there are plans to open the beach up now that the city doesn't expect large groups to gather as summer is coming to an end. Mr. Whitt staff is working on a better system to close the beach in the future, so that it is not necessary to use orange barrels and caution tape. Mr. Whitt said if it turns into a problem then we will close it again. Mr. Whitt said we are still looking into playground equipment to replace what

had been removed. Mr. Whitt said staff will bring options to the commission to make a final decision. Mr. Whitt said let's not forget that we are still in the middle of a pandemic and we are short staffed in our Department of Public Works so things have been slowed down considerably. Mr. Whitt said we are also working on a plan to re do the sidewalks downtown and will be further discussing where we are in terms of grants, we applied for downtown improvements. Mr. Whitt said again, several projects have been postponed because of the pandemic.

Chairman O'Rourke asked if we have a date for the re-opening of the beach.

City Manager Whitt said we don't have a date but our DPW staff will open it as soon as they are available to do so. Mr. Whitt said that could be as early as this week.

Chairman O'Rourke said at the previous Parks & Recreation meeting we discussed the Paddleboard business using the beach to run their business. Mr. O'Rourke asked if Mr. Whitt if he has any follow up information in regard to the issue.

City Manager Whitt said it seems as though currently they are using the restaurant parking lot and property, not city property. Since the beach has been closed, no one has been able to utilize the beach. Mr. Whitt said if they begin to encroach on the beach again, we can shut it down. Mr. Whitt said we do have limited resources and again are in the middle of a pandemic. Mr. Whitt said we will have code enforcement enforce that kind of issue if it arises again.

Chairman O'Rourke said I want to make it clear that we don't want to shut the business down we just don't want them taking up 10 to 12 feet of space on the public beach.

City Manager Whitt agreed stating the city cannot let the beach turn into a commercial enterprise. Mr. Whitt said the solution to that might not be as simple as it may seem but if they encroach on the beach again, we can work on getting enforcement.

DPW Team Lead Ladd said he would like to add that he is meeting with a fence company on Wednesday morning in regard to securing the beach. Mr. Ladd said we are thinking about putting some sliding gates at the entrances to allow us to actually close the beach area when needed.

City Manager Whitt suggested Mr. Ladd give the commission an update on the light pole's downtown maintenance.

DPW Team Lead Ladd said he will be meeting with the painter this week. Mr. Ladd said he needed a couple days to shuffle his schedule around. Mr. Ladd said we are going to start at Riley Park and then move downtown towards the beach. Mr. Ladd said he is hoping to get 10 to 15 poles repainted this fall. Mr. Ladd said that should cover Riley Park, the beach, and most of downtown.

City Manager Whitt asked Mr. Ladd when he thinks he will have the beach back opened.

DPW Team Lead Ladd said he is waiting for Metro Environmental to remove the portable restrooms and then they will remove the buoys which signifies the beach is closed for the season.

Mr. Ladd said then we can lock the buoys in the restroom enclosure. Mr. Ladd said he can remove the barrels and caution tape as early as tomorrow. Mr. Ladd said we will be switching the banners on the light poles over to the fall ones here shortly.

Mayor Ackley asked if we are thinking about fencing in the beach along the restaurant and restroom enclosure side. Mayor Ackley said there is a fence on the residential side already. Mayor Ackley said that way we could close the Beach area at night to keep people out after hours.

DPW Team Lead Ladd said that is something we can look into.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Mayor Ackley's 2020 Trunk-or-Treat Event

City Manager Whitt explained that the city is sponsoring a social distanced Trunk-or-Treat event at Riley Park this year. Mr. Whitt said it sounds like there is discussion around cancelling Trick-or-Treating this year, so we want to put together an event for the kids. Mr. Whitt explained that the Mayor has agreed to assist by asking local businesses to help sponsor the Trunk-or-Treat event.

Mayor Ackley said since Halloween is on a Saturday this year our target day is October 31st. Mayor Ackley said we did throw the event last year for the first time and it was a success. Mayor Ackley said she did keep a list of businesses that participated at last year's event and has reached out to them to see if they would like to participate again this year. Mayor Ackley said we are looking for ideas or suggestions from the commission and if you know anyone that would like to participate just send her an email.

2. Budget YTD

Chairman O'Rourke asked if we know where we are at as far as our budget. Mr. O'Rourke also asked how much money the Green House donated towards the Riley Park rehabilitation project.

City Manager Whitt said he doesn't have the numbers in front of him but that's something we can bring back at the next meeting. Mr. Whitt explained that much of the money budgeted is still available since many of the 2020 events were cancelled.

3. Park amenities

Commissioner Hecht said his goal and the goal of the commission is to leave the parks better than they were in prior years. Mr. Hecht said this applies to maintenance and improvements Mr. Hecht said he visits parks in other communities often which helps him come up with ideas for our parks. Mr. Hecht said he would like the commission to look into purchasing some additional picnic tables for the parks and run electricity to those tables for people to utilize and potentially work from the park. Mr. Hecht also discussed putting disc golf at Sims

Park. Mr. Hecht said it seems to be a popular game for all ages and easy for the DPW to maintain. Mr. Hecht said he is just trying to think of affordable and low maintenance ways to attract people to our parks.

DPW Team Lead Ladd stated that we do already have electricity at Sims Park as well as Riley Park. Mr. Ladd suggested we put some extension cords running to our existing picnic tables. Mr. Ladd said that would probably be a good start before we spend any money to make sure it will be utilized.

Board Member Cheney said for point of reference he had looked into buying those baskets and there was a company in Walled Lake that sells them, and they are about \$250 a piece.

City Manager Whitt said we ought to take Mr. Hecht's ideas and put together a design concept and bring it back to the commission. Mr. Whitt said we can have Mr. Ladd get some quotes.

Chairman O'Rourke said he will reach out to the disc golf business and report back next month.

4. Rogers Entertainment Proposed Concert

Board member Johnson thanked everyone for their participation and said he continues to learn from Chairman O'Rourke, Mr. Hecht, Ms. Jaquays, and Mr. Whitt during these meetings in regard to what the city needs. Mr. Johnson said he went out and did his due diligence in regard to the proposed concert he had mentioned at the prior meeting. Mr. Johnson said he did attend the JET play that took place in July and has attended the farmers market so he could see how events are commenced at that location. Mr. Johnson said a big part of the event is funding, he would like a strong grounding of sponsorship. He would hate for people to sponsor the event and there be a small turnout. Mr. Johnson said after looking into it more in depth and with the COVID-19 spike he would like to postpone the concert until next summer. Mr. Johnson said he would rather not rush it. It seems like less people are attending in-person events because of the pandemic. Mr. Johnson said he did go out and take some polls to see what genres people would like to see. He said he did collect his own independently so when the time comes, he will have a strong start. He said because of COVID-19 it is hard to maximize the space and an event right now.

5. Trailway Safety

Chairman O'Rourke said he is concerned about the crosswalks that are along the trail. Mr. O'Rourke said he has had several neighbors reach out with concerns as well. Mr. O'Rourke said the bicyclists are darting out into the road and aren't using the warning signals. Mr. O'Rourke said he had a close call the other day and is hearing similar feedback from residents and business owners. Mr. O'Rourke said people are not practicing proper safety and he would like to have a conversation about what we can do to enforce greater safety habits. Mr. O'Rourke said one suggestion he has is to paint a giant stop sign in front of the intersections a little way back to encourage these bicyclists to stop. Mr. O'Rourke said as

part of the parks & Recreation Commission he feels they need to work on the safety aspect of the trail crossings.

Commissioner Johnson said he lives near the crossing on Decker and he has noticed it is a problem as well. Mr. Johnson said going back to what Mr. Ladd said about putting fencing at the beach, he said maybe we need to think about putting fencing up at the trail crossings. Mr. Johnson said people are riding their bikes at night and darting out across the road without stopping. Mr. Johnson said I don't think it is a matter of them not seeing, it's a matter of them not caring. Mr. Johnson said he doesn't want to see something bad happen.

City Manager Whitt agreed with each one of the commissioners about the neglect of some of the trail users. Mr. Whitt opined that it does seem to be more of the bicyclists that don't pay attention to the traffic flow. Mr. Whitt explained that he had witnessed some of those things as well. Mr. Whitt opined that these safety issues were not planned very well from the beginning. Mr. Whitt explained that the city is able to put up signs along the Walled Lake Trail as long as it is in our jurisdiction. Mr. Whitt informed the commission that their authority is to make a motion to recommend to council for trail regulations.

**P&R 09-02-20 MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT STOP
SIGNS BE PAINTED ON THE TRAIL BEFORE EACH
INTERSECTION IN WALLED LAKE'S JURISDICTION**

Motion by Hecht, seconded by Cheney, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To recommend to city council that stop signs be painted on the trail before each intersection in walled lake's jurisdiction

**P&R 09-03-20 MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT SPEED
BUMPS BE PLACED ON THE TRAIL BEFORE EACH
INTERSECTION IN WALLED LAKE'S JURISDICTION**

Motion by Hecht, seconded by Cheney, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To recommend to city council that speed bumps be placed on the trail before each intersection in walled lake's jurisdiction

DISCUSSION:

Chairman O'Rourke said he would like to express his support for the JET Theater. Commissioner O'Rourke explained that he and his wife attended the Emperor's New Clothes production that was put on last month at the public safety campus saying it was a wonderful production.

Commissioner Johnson explained that he would agree with Commissioner O'Rourke. Mr. Johnson said the Emperor's New Clothes production was phenomenal and what they did showed the possibilities of what the public safety campus expansion can do.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Neal Wolfson, 565 Winwood Ct.- Mr. Wolfson said it was a good meeting, a few things I would like to bring up. Mr. Wolfson said maybe we can have a snowman building contest at the public safety campus or an ice carving contest. Mr. Wolfson said we can have these events while social distancing and putting the campus to use. Mr. Wolfson said it is a great area to put on events, there are so many possibilities.

P&R 09-04-20 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Miranda Gross
Deputy Clerk

Dennis O'Rourke
Chairman